DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 186 832 CG 014 429

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TITLE Guidance Programs in Maryland: Utilization of Research Results by a Board Appointed Task Force.
PUB DATE 80
NOTE 26p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Boston, MA, April 7-11, 1980).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Counselor Evaluation; Counselor Role; Elementary Secondary Education; Evaluation Methods; *Guidance Objectives; *Guidance Programs; *Needs Assessment; Research Utilization; School Community Relationship; School Counselors; *School Guidance; State Surveys; Student Development; *Student Needs
IDENTIFIERS *Maryland

ABSTRACT

In response to concerns about the role of the school counselor in guidance programs, the Maryland State Board of Education appointed a one-year task force to study the guidance programs in Maryland schools and to make recommendations for program improvement. The responsibilities of the task force were to: (1) establish state goals and objectives for guidance programs; (2) examine guidance personnel roles; (3) evaluate counselor knowledge and skills; (4) establish the elements of a "good" guidance program; and (5) determine a methodology for evaluating school guidance programs. The task force assessed the guidance needs of students and translated those needs with the help of factor analyses into guidance goals and objectives, and surveyed the school community's perception of current and future guidance personnel and program requirements necessary for meeting the goals and objectives. The findings provided a basis for establishing a set of recommendations for future guidance programs within Maryland. Also developed was a state plan for guidance which included state, local school system, and individual school activities to be followed for the next five years. (Author)

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GUIDANCE PROGRAMS IN MARYLAND UTILIZATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS BY A BOARD APPOINTED TASK FORCE

A Paper Presented at the National Conference

of the

American Educational Research Association

1980

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INTRODUCTION

In December 1977, the Maryland State Board of Education held a policy discussion on school based guidance programs. Major concerns as viewed by Board members and the Superintendent were presented. The following problems with guidance programs were cited: 1) the broad scope of activities expected to be performed by counselors, 2) the lack of community awareness regarding the role of school guidance, 3) the adequacy of student-counselor ratios in Maryland schools, and 4) the questionable use of counselors to perform clerical and administrative tasks. The discussion, in summary, indicated concerns about the role and duties of the school counselor.

As a result of the policy discussion, the Board appointed a task force, consisting of members with varied backgrounds, to study for one year the guidance programs conducted in Maryland schools and to make appropriate recommendations for improving these programs whenever necessary. Specifically, the task force was charged with the following responsibilities: 1) establishing State goals and objectives for guidance programs, 2) examining personnel roles and staffing patterns in guidance programs, 3) evaluating counselor's knowledge and skills, 4) establishing the elements of "good" guidance programs, and 5) determining a methodology for evaluating school level guidance programs. In order to accomplish its goals, the task force divided its work into two phases:

Phase 1: An assessment of student needs consisting of reanalyzing existing assessment data and translating those needs into guidance goals and objectives

Phase 2: An evaluation of the guidance personnel and program requirements necessary for meeting established goals and objectives

The 1978-79 study of guidance programs in Maryland is not the first of its kind for the state. For example, the Interprofessional Research Commission on Pupil Services (IRCOPPS) studied the area of guidance as a part of its total investigation of pupil services in Maryland. The earlier IRCOPPS report (1970) indicated similar concerns about guidance programs as were still being expressed by the State Board in 1978. That is, counselors were burdened with non-counseling activities, the role of counselors needed to be clarified, and more services were needed in specific schools and for some students. Unfortunately, the State Board took no actions after the IRCOPPS report, and the concerns of 1970 remained unresolved in 1978.

The current study of guidance programs in Maryland appears to be consistent with a national trend to examine the function of guidance programs in American schools. In August 1977, the Office of Education along with the American Personnel and Guidance Association established a three phased project to assess the status of guidance as called for in P.L. 94-482 (Herr, 1979). One of the recommendations of the national study was for states to establish local task forces so as to recommend models of developmental guidance programs. Such studies have been begun by other state school systems (Michigan, 1978).

Phase I: Needs Assessment

In Phase I of the task force study, student needs assessments conducted in the Maryland Public Schools were examined. These assessments were conducted at the elementary middle/junior, and senior high school levels. At the elementary level, student needs were determined by surveying 1,500 school personnel and parents on the 30 item Counseling Needs Assessment Instrument. In contrast, student needs assessed at the middle/junior and senior high levels surveyed only students using the 50 item Student Needs Assessment Instrument (6,481 students)

and 60 item Pupil Personnel Needs Assessment Survey (10,572 students), respectively.

Student needs assessment data were analyzed using principal components factor analysis. Although a different number of factors was determined in each needs assessment investigation, the three areas most noted at all developmental levels were: 1) understanding one's self (academically and emotionally), 2) interactions with others, and 3) planning for the future. However, the order of importance of the factors was varied for different developmental levels. That is, at the elementary level, self-understanding appeared most important as perceived by school staff members and parents, while at the middle and senior high school levels, planning for the future was perceived by students as most important.

In order to meet the guidance-related needs of Maryland students, relevant state goals and objectives were developed. These goals and objectives were based on the needs assessment data, the goals and objectives of the Maryland school systems, and a survey of guidance related literature. As a result of these activities, three major goals for guidance programs in Maryland were identified: 1) personal and academic growth of students, 2) the development of interpersonal skills, and 3) the understanding and application of the decision-making process to life choices. The goal statements were of a general nature and delineate long-range needs. Although the goals were more specific than the identified needs, they were still too general to serve as workable objectives for guidance programs.

Following each goal statement a series of general objectives, usually sequentially related to the stated goals, were developed. These objectives were designed to be applicable to all grade levels and not specific enough to be directly evaluated. Therefore, specific behavioral or performance objectives

needed to be developed later by each school or school system. It was the perspective of the task force that the development of behavioral/performance objectives for each of the general objectives was outside the scope of its charge and were most appropriately developed by the local system. However, after completion of the task force report, the Maryland State Department of Education's specialist in guidance rewrote the general objectives into specific performance objectives which could be used by all systems.

Phase II: Evaluating Guidance Personnel and Program Requirements

This phase of the investigation examined guidance activities in Maryland public schools. Three surveys were conducted:

1. Survey One examined guidance practices and counselor proficiencies
2. Survey Two examined the role and function of guidance counselors.
3. Survey Three investigated counselors' use of time.

Surveys One and Two, Guidance Activities and Personnel: Methods

Subjects. A total of 632 participants (168 teachers, 307 pupil service members, 96 school-based administrators, and 61 central office administrators) completed Pupil Services Survey I; whereas, 583 participants (155 teachers, 270 pupil service members, 91 school-based administrators, and 61 central office administrators) completed Pupil Services Survey II.

All 24 Maryland education units participated in this investigation and provided the random representative sample requested by the task force. Participants remained anonymous and all identifying information was destroyed.

Instrumentation. Pupil Services Survey I obtained information from various school personnel concerning: 1) the need and effectiveness of various guidance activities, 2) the proficiencies of counselors in specified areas, and 3) guidance

staffing patterns. The second instrument, Pupil Services Survey II examined the role and function of school based counselors. Both instruments were modified attitude questionnaires with checklist features.

Procedure. Two procedures were used to distribute both the Pupil Services Survey I and II to the representative random sample of participants. Regardless of the procedure used, county liaison persons assisted the task force with all stages of the data collection (the procedure used was determined by the local school systems).

For the first procedure, a live presentation explored: 1) the purpose of the questionnaire, 2) the topics covered by the questionnaire, and 3) the directions for completing each section of the questionnaire. To ensure uniformity in presentations, all information was shown using overlay transparencies and the overhead projector. After the presentation, the questionnaires were randomly distributed to the participants. Participants were allowed as much time as they wished to complete the questionnaire.

In the second procedure, the questionnaires were mailed to randomly selected participants. A letter accompanied each questionnaire covering the same topics as in the first procedure. Participants were required to read all information by themselves and respond to each item as well as they could. The questionnaire return rate was approximately 90 percent.

A series of analyses of variance on selected items revealed that procedures one and two yielded similar results; therefore, all questionnaires were analyzed together.

All individual questionnaire information was confidentially maintained. Data were not compiled by counties or by individual schools as per the direction of the State Board.

Survey One, Guidance Activities: Results

Prior to analyzing the data for the primary purposes, analyses (analysis of variance with the Scheffe follow-up test) were conducted and revealed that participant variables, such as number of years in public education, would, in general, have minimal, if any, effect on the results.

Counselor Proficiency. All surveyed respondents agreed that counselors should have a great deal, or at least some, proficiency in all knowledge and skill areas included in the study. However, as can be seen in Table 1, counselors were perceived as having a significantly lower level of competency than desired or expected. Generally counselors perceived their knowledge and skill competency levels more positively than other professional groups, whereas psychologists were more critical than all other groups (see Table 2). A comparison of expected and actual knowledge and skills revealed that the greatest discrepancy in knowledge was in the areas of parenting and legislation; in skills the greatest discrepancy was in the areas of behavior change assessment, behavior management, conflict resolution, group counseling, and school climate.

Delivery Systems. The findings for the four topics categorized under delivery systems indicated:

1. Counselor/student ratio - The optimum counselor/student ratio indicated by respondents was approximately 250-300 students to one counselor.

2. Guidance paraprofessionals - All of the various guidance paraprofessionals (i.e., student facilitators, student registrars, student advisors, adult volunteers, teacher advisors, record clerks, registrars, registrar assistants, career technicians, clerks and secretaries) were perceived as either helpful or very helpful.

3. Assignment of students to counselors - Respondents indicated that the best procedure for initially assigning students to counselors is by grade level followed by a matching of student needs to counselor strength.

TABLE 1

Counselor Competencies

Competency Area	Should Be Proficient[a] $\bar{X}$[b]	Sd[c]	95% Confidence Interval for the Mean		Are Proficient $\bar{X}$	Sd	95% Confidence Interval for the Mean	
Knowledge								
Theories	1.1	.4	1.2	1.1	1.8	.8	1.8	1.7
Behavior Management	1.3	.5	1.4	1.3	2.2	1.0	2.3	2.1
Group Dynamics	1.3	.6	1.3	1.2	2.2	1.0	2.3	2.1
Guidance Material	1.4	.5	1.4	1.3	2.2	.9	2.3	2.1
Pupil Services Role	1.3	.5	1.3	1.2	1.8	.9	1.9	1.8
Referral Agencies	1.3	.6	1.4	1.3	2.1	.9	2.1	1.9
Behavior Change Assessments	1.4	.7	1.4	1.3	2.2	1.0	2.3	2.1
Parenting	1.5	.6	1.6	1.5	2.6	1.0	2.7	2.5
Child Rights	1.3	.8	1.4	1.3	2.0	1.0	2.1	1.9
School Organization	1.6	.8	1.7	1.6	2.1	1.0	2.1	2.0
School Laws	1.7	.7	1.7	1.6	2.6	1.1	2.7	2.5
Code of Ethics	1.4	.5	1.5	1.3	2.2	1.0	2.2	2.1
Test Interpretation	1.2	.9	1.3	1.2	1.8	.9	1.9	1.7
Research	1.8	.6	1.8	1.7	2.5	1.1	2.6	2.4
Job Development	1.3	.7	1.4	1.3	2.1	.8	2.1	2.0
Minorities	1.5	.7	1.5	1.4	2.3	.9	2.3	2.2
Guidance Trends	1.7	.7	1.7	1.6	2.5	1.0	2.6	2.4
Sex Roles	1.4	.7	1.5	1.4	2.3	.9	2.4	2.2
Guidance Program Planning	1.4	.7	1.4	1.3	2.1	.9	2.2	2.0
Professional Organization	1.7	.8	1.7	1.6	2.2	.9	2.3	2.1
Legislation	1.6	.8	1.6	1.5	2.6	1.1	2.7	2.5
School Curriculum	1.3	.6	1.3	1.2	1.8	.9	1.9	1.8
Skills								
Behavior Management	1.5	.6	1.5	1.4	2.4	1.0	2.4	2.3
Conflict Resolution	1.6	.8	1.7	1.6	2.4	1.1	2.6	2.5
Community Concerns	1.6	.7	1.6	1.5	2.3	1.0	2.4	2.3
Group Counseling	1.3	.5	1.3	1.2	2.2	1.0	2.3	2.1
Individual Counseling	1.1	.3	1.1	1.1	1.7	.8	1.8	1.6
Guidance Programming	1.4	.5	1.4	1.3	2.2	1.0	2.3	2.1
Behavior Change Assessment	1.5	.7	1.6	1.5	2.5	1.0	2.6	2.4
Inservice Development	1.7	.8	1.8	1.7	2.5	1.0	2.6	2.4
Consulting Technique	1.2	.5	1.2	1.2	1.9	.9	2.0	1.8
School Climate	1.4	.7	1.4	1.3	2.3	1.0	2.4	2.2
School Records Maintenance	1.9	1.1	2.0	1.8	1.9	.9	2.0	1.8
Test Interpretation	1.3	.6	1.3	1.3	1.9	.9	1.9	1.8
Coordinating Referral Services	1.3	.6	1.4	1.3	1.9	.9	2.0	1.9

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Counselor Competencies

Competency Area	Should Be Proficient[a] $\bar{X}$[b]	Sd[c]	95% Confidence Interval for the Mean		Are Proficient $\bar{X}$	Sd	95% Confidence Interval for the Mean	
Skills (Continued)								
Placement Services	1.5	.8	1.6	1.5	2.3	1.0	2.4	2.3
Identification of Exceptional Children	1.5	.7	1.5	1.4	2.2	1.0	2.3	2.1
Using Labor Data Statistics	1.8	.9	1.8	1.7	2.6	1.0	2.7	2.5
Report Test Scores	1.9	1.0	1.9	1.8	2.5	1.1	2.6	2.4
Research and Evaluation Techniques	2.0	1.0	2.1	1.9	2.8	1.1	2.9	2.7
Demonstrating Pro-social Behavior	1.3	.6	1.3	1.2	1.9	.9	2.0	1.9

[a]Scale

1 = Great deal of knowledge
2 = Some knowledge
3 = Not sure
4 = Little knowledge
5 = No knowledge

[b]Mean

[c]Standard Deviation

TABLE 2

Perceptions of Counselor Competencies by
Different Professional Groups

Competency Area	Should Be Proficient F	Should Be Proficient Scheffé[a]	Are Proficient F	Are Proficient Scheffé[a]
Knowledge of				
Theories	.93	-	13.05*	3>4,1,5[b]
Behavior Management	1.03	-	15.48*	3>4,6,2,5,1
Group Dynamics	.69	-	5.29*	3,1>4
Guidance Materials	1.52	-	1.24	-
Pupil Service Roles	1.09	-	7.84*	3>4,2,1
Referral Agencies	4.24*	6,3,1>2	5.70*	3,6,1>4
Behavior Change Assessment	6.04*	6,5,1,3>4	13.15*	3,1,5,2,6>4
Parenting	3.40*	1>4	5.16*	8,1>4
Child Rights	1.42	-	3.73*	-
School Organizations	1.45	-	3.63*	-
School Law	2.96*	1>4	5.02*	1>2,5
Ethics	1.87	-	2.05	-
Test Interpretation	1.22	-	5.68*	3,2>4
Research	8.29*	5,1,2,3>4	7.97*	2,3,5,1,6>4
Job Development	1.60	-	1.75	-
Ethnic and Minority Groups	2.18	-	2.54	-
Guidance Trends	3.36*	-	3.00*	1>4
Sex Roles	1.92	-	5.12*	3>6,4
Guidance Programming	4.22*	5>4	6.50	3>4,1
Professional Organizations	1.55	-	4.23*	3>4
Legislation	1.36	-	1.79	-
School Curriculum	1.73	-	7.34*	2,3>1,4
Skills in				
Behavior Management	2.69	-	14.22*	3,5,1>4
Conflict Resolution	1.74	-	13.22*	-
Community Concerns	3.13*	-	7.81*	3>4,6,5,2,1
Group Counseling	3.44*	-	9.72*	3,6,1>4
Individual Counseling	4.62*	5,3,1,6>4	15.52*	3,6,2,5,1>4
Program Planning	4.44*	5,1,3>4	6.65*	3>4
Behavior Change Assessment	8.04*	3,1,5>4	1.04*	-
Inservice Development	3.46*	-	2.75	-
Consultation Techniques	10.37*	3,2,6,1>4	1.98	-
School Climate	2.00	-	11.17*	3>4,5,1
School Records Maintenance	5.51*	2,5>3	3.87*	-
Test Interpretation	4.61*	1,5,2,6,3>4	10.15*	3,2,6,1>4

TABLE 2 (Continued)

Perceptions of Counselor Competencies by
Different Professional Groups

Competency Area	Should Be Proficient F	Should Be Proficient Scheffé[a]	Are Proficient F	Are Proficient Scheffé[a]
Skills in (Continued)				
Coordinating Referral Services	2.15	-	6.54*	3>4,5,1
Placement SErvices	1.57	-	1.76	-
Identifying Exceptional Children	13.92*	5,1,3,2,6>4	6.94*	3,2,1,5>4
Using Labor Statistics	1.93	-	1.34	-
Reporting Test Information	3.88*	5>4,3	2.74	-
Research and Evaluation Techniques	9.81*	5,1,6,3,2>4	6.97*	3,2,5,1>4
Demonstrating Pro-social Behavior	1.58	-	6.95*	3>5

[a]Professional Groups

1 = Teachers
2 = Pupil personnel workers
3 = Counselors
4 = Psychologists
5 = School based administrators
6 = Central office administrators

[b] > Knowledge and skill considered more important

* $p < .01$

4. Supplementary guidance delivery systems - Computer assisted scheduling, audiovisual aids, and guidance information systems were perceived as useful by respondents.

Helpfulness of Counselors. Different professional groups did not perceive counselor's helpfulness to children and other adults in the same manner. Elementary personnel, counselors, directors, and pupil services supervisors perceived counselors to be more helpful to children than did the other professional groups ($F = 14.16$, $p < .01$). Further, all school-based administrators, pupil service supervisors, and counselors perceived--significantly more than other professional groups--that counselors help adults ($F = 18.16$, $p < .01$). Finally, counselors were perceived to be significantly more helpful to children than to adults.

Survey Two, Role Description: Results

A series of analyses of variance and Scheffé follow-up tests were conducted on an item by item basis to determine whether there were significant differences in how various professional groups perceived counselor roles and functions. For general trends in role perceptions to become evident, the items were grouped into broad job categories as follows: 1) direct service (e.g., student appraisal, guidance, counseling and family related services), 2) indirect service (e.g., case related consultation and general school activities), 3) extra school services (e.g., system-wide and community services), and 4) administrative (e.g., scheduling and duties).

Although most of the tasks included in the survey were considered important for counselors to perform by all professional groups (41 items), significant differences in perceptions for the four job categories indicated a number of trends (see Table 3).

1. Direct Services

   a. Student appraisal was perceived to be more important for

TABLE 3

Perceived Importance of Counselor Tasks by Professional Groups

Task	Perceived Importance $\bar{X}$[a]	Sd[b]	Differences in Perception F	Differences Among Groups Scheffé[c]
Direct Services				
1. Student Appraisal				
Observes children	1.5	.9	2.34*	
Conducts initial screenings: ability and achievement	2.3	1.4	5.75*	1,2,5,6,3 4;1>3[d]
Interviews suspended pupils	2.4	1.5	7.89*	1>2,4,5,3;6>2
Screen pupil readiness	2.5	1.5	3.75*	1>4
Investigates boundary, non-resident, and transfer cases	4.1	1.3	6.41*	1>2,3
Conducts individual assessments/evaluations	2.8	1.6	21.6*	1,5,6,3,2>4;1>2;1,5>3
Reviews incoming records	1.6	1.0	1.58	-
Obtains social and developmental history	2.6	1.4	2.70*	1>2
2. Counseling				
Counsels teachers on personal problems	3.4	1.4	8.41*	3,1>6;3>5
Works with pupils often absent	2.0	1.2	2.71*	5>4
Responds to crisis cases	1.6	1.4	3.45*	3,4>4,2,6
Counsels students on course selection	1.3	.8		
Provides individual or group (pupil) counseling: mild/moderate problems	1.4	.8	4.84*	3>4,2
Provides individual or group (pupil) counseling: severe problems	2.4	1.5	4.68*	5>4,3
Provides individual or group (parent) counseling	2.2	1.4	1.67	-
3. Guidance				
Assists students with occupational placements	1.5	.9	1.21	-
Serves as a child advocate	2.0	1.2	2.29	-

TABLE 3 (Continued)

Perceived Importance of Counselor Tasks by Professional Groups

Task	Perceived Importance $\bar{X}$[a]	Sd[b]	Difference in Perception F	Difference Among Groups Scheffé[c]
3. Guidance (Continued)				
Schedules students for courses	1.8	1.4	8.75*	2,6,1>3[d]
Helps register and orient new students	1.6	1.1	1.63	
Maintains continuing relations with pupils	1.4	.8	2.89*	3>1
Disseminates guidance materials	1.7	1.1	2.54	
Provides job preparation	1.9	1.2	11.22*	2,4,6>3
Maintains Records	1.8	1.2	1.64	
4. Family Related				
Meets with parents of pupils often absent	2.0	1.2	3.58*	6>4,3
Meets with parents to discuss psychological evaluations	2.7	1.5	14.98*	1,5,3,6>4 1,5,3>2;1>4
Handles initial parent inquiries	1.8	1.2	4.78*	4,3,1>5
Investigates child neglect	2.9	1.5	3.61*	1,3>5
Visits homes to discuss pupil problems	3.4	1.4	2.25*	-
Discusses home management problems with parents				
Indirect Services				
1. Case Related Consultation				
Works on program modifications for pupils	1.5	1.5	2.28	
Prepares reports for court action	3.2	1.4	14.69*	5,1>4,2,3
Suggests dispositions for suspended pupils	2.9	1.5	10.10*	6,1>2,3
Assists in writing IEPs for pupils	2.2	1.3	4.68*	5>4,3
Prepares testimony for court and follow-up action	3.6	1.4	18.20*	5,6>1,4
2. General School Consultation				
Assists teachers with classroom atmosphere	2.1	1.3	1.30	-
Plans career education program	1.6	1.0	2.18	-

TABLE 3 (Continued)

Perceived Importance of Counselor Tasks by Professional Groups

Task	Perceived Importance $\bar{X}$[a]	Sd[b]	Difference in Perception F	Difference Among Groups Scheffé[c]
2. General School Consultation (Continued)				
Plans service delivery with administrators	1.6	1.0	3.32*	3,5,6,1>[d]4,2
Organizes ARD	2.8	1.5	14.69*	5,1>4,2,3
Helps develop better school climate	1.4	.8	4.57*	3>1
Attends ARD	1.7	1.1	1.93	-
Assists teachers in understanding pupils	1.7	1.1	4.81*	3,5>4
Interprets group test results	1.4	.9	1.70	-
Coordinates identification of special needs pupils	1.6	1.4	6.50*	3,5>2,4
Conducts research on school problems	2.9	1.4	1.51	-
Assists in resolving school crisis	1.7	1.0	1.01	-
Extra School Services				
1. Systemwide				
Interprets local school policies	2.5	1.4	2.17	-
Insures current labor market data	2.2	1.4	5.08*	2,1>3
Conducts inservice	2.9	1.4	1.20	-
Serves on curricula committees	2.4	1.3	3.04*	-
Serves as a human relations person	2.5	1.4	2.50*	-
2. Community Service				
Serves as a community liaison	2.7	1.4	8.82*	3,5>4;3,5,1>2;3>6
Serves as a liaison to agencies	2.5	1.4	4.69*	3,1>2
Conducts parent education groups	2.5	1.4	1.09	-
Acts as a resource person for PTAs	2.5	1.4	1.42	-

TABLE 3 (Continued)

Perceived Importance of Counselor Tasks by Professional Groups

Task	Perceived Importance $\bar{X}$[a]	Sd[b]	Difference in Perception F	Difference Among Groups Scheffé[c]
Administrative				
Performs administrative duties	3.6	1.5	8.26*	5,2,6,1 > 3
Supervises interns	3.8	1.3	1.81	-
Coordinates the testing program	2.2	1.5	8.92*	6,5,2,1 > 4,3

[a] Mean
1 = Very Important
2 = Important
3 = Not Sure
4 = Not Important

[b] Standard Deviations

[c] Professional Groups
1 = Teachers
2 = Pupil Personnel Workers
3 = Counselors
4 = Psychologists
5 = School-based Administrators
6 = Central-office Administrators

[d] > Task considered more important than

* $p < .01$

counselors to perform by teachers than by other groups. In contrast, psychologists perceived the student appraisal role, in general, to be less important for counselors to perform.

b. Counseling functions were perceived to be more important for counselors to perform by counselors than by other groups.

c. Guidance activities, other than scheduling and job preparation tasks, were perceived to be more important for counselors to perform by counselors than by other groups.

d. Family related services yielded mixed and contradictory results. Such results may be expected, for most of the items within this category are to be done by other pupil service's members.

2. Indirect Services

a. Consultation was perceived to be less important for counselors to perform by pupil service workers, counselors and psychologists than by those whom counselors consult (teachers and administrators).

b. General school consultation was perceived by counselors in comparison to other groups to be a more important service.

3. Extra School Services

a. System-wide services were perceived to be more important to perform by teachers and pupil personnel workers than by counselors.

b. Community services were perceived by counselors and teachers to be a more important service to perform than did pupil personnel workers.

4. Administrative

a. Administrative tasks (e.g., scheduling, paper work) were perceived by counselors to be more important to perform than such tasks were to teachers and administrators.

b. Many of the complaints about how counselors use their time seem to be a problem in the counselor's perceptions of priorities.

Although the various professional groups perceived the counselor's role somewhat differently, all the groups indicated that 41 of the 56 tasks were important, if not very important for counselors to perform. A comparison of these tasks to the job descriptions prepared by different school systems indicated

a number of discrepancies. That is, a number of tasks designated as important for counselors to perform by the respondents are not indicated on counselors' job descriptions, but are indicated on other pupil service members' job descriptions. It appears, therefore, that what counselors are expected to perform may be more appropriate for others to perform. Further, when counselors perform duties that others can and should be performing, counselors may not be able to perform tasks which are appropriately within their domain.

Survey Three, Time Study: Methods and Results

Survey Three was a preliminary investigation to determine how counselors used their time. Although two school systems provided time study data, the task force wanted a more total picture for the state. Therefore, a phone survey was conducted using a random representative sample of ten percent of the state's counselors. The counselors reported the amount of time they spent in seven types of guidance activities: 1) counseling, 2) consulting, 3) administrative duties, 4) information dissemination, 5) information processing, 6) student appraisal, and 7) program planning, coordination and evaluation. They also reported the amount of time spent working with the general student population, special education students, gifted and talented youth, disruptive youth and vocational students.

Table 4 illustrates that counselors at all levels spend more time in counseling than in any other activity, with elementary counselors spending more time in counseling activities than either middle, junior, or senior high school counselors. The amount of time being spent on administrative and information dissemination and processing activities involves between 20 to 40 percent of the counselor's time with senior high counselors spending 44 percent of their time on such activities. Finally, it should be noted that there was great

TABLE 4

Percent of Time Counselors Spend in Guidance Activities with Different Student Populations

	School Level					
	Elementary		Middle/Junior		Senior High	
Activity/Population	$\bar{X}$[c]	Sd[d]	$\bar{X}$	Sd	$\bar{X}$	Sd
Activity						
Counseling	48.9	13.7	37.9	14.7	29.7	17.1
Consulting	20.0	8.2	15.3	6.6	13.5	6.8
Administrative Duties	4.2	4.9	5.9	8.5	6.2	9.6
Information Dissemination[a]	13.3	11.3	11.2	5.3	17.2	7.6
Information Processing[b]	4.3	1.0	16.5	12.8	21.2	12.4
Student Appraisal	5.9	1.0	5.8	3.5	5.1	5.1
Program Planning, Coordination, and Evaluation	4.4	4.8	7.9	4.8	7.9	4.9
Population						
General Programs	57.2	23.3	52.4	18.1	50.7	18.3
Special Education	17.3	5.7	19.1	10.8	11.7	10.3
Gifted and Talented	3.7	4.5	5.9	6.0	8.7	6.9
Disruptive Youth	22.1	12.3	16.3	10.6	15.2	12.0
Vocational Education	Not Applicable		6.3	8.0	14.0	6.6

[a]Dissemination of college, vocational, job, course, and related information.

[b]Processing of information such as in scheduling, records, registration and individual education plans.

[c]Mean

[d]Standard Deviation

variation in the way counselors spend their time in various schools (see standard deviations in Table 4.

An examination of Table 4 indicated that counselors spend more time with students in the general population than other types of students which is to be expected. However, special education and vocational students are being helped considerably. The indepth shadow studies of the two local education agencies showed parallel results to those of the state study using self reports. Therefore, the data, although limited, probably shows general trends in how counselors use their school time.

Discussion and Educational Implications

The purpose of the present research was to provide the Guidance Task Force and in turn the State Superintendent and Board with data based guides for making educational decisions and administrative policy. The charges to the task force required information to be collected which was basically descriptive in nature, indicating what does exist and what should exist in the area of school-based guidance programs in Maryland as viewed by various educational professionals. Such information provided the task force with a better understanding of not only the current status of Maryland guidance programs, but also the directions for future guidance programs within the state.

Included within the task force report were the results of the three surveys, related literature reviews, and 28 recommendations, based on the research findings and literature, addressing each of the Board charges. The recommendations, which provided the policy action information, involved: 1) establishing state guidance goals and objectives, 2) determining professional criteria for personnel, 3) delineating guidance program elements, 4) establishing alternative staffing requirements, and 5) providing a set of standards for evaluating school guidance programs.

After receiving the report from the task force, the Board considered the implications and ramifications of the recommendations during a two-day meeting with the task force members, Maryland State Department of Education staff, and local school system administrators and teachers. At the end of the meeting, the Board directed the Maryland State Department of Education pupil service's staff to develop a five-year action plan for guidance programs within the state based on a number of recommendations from the task force report. The Board and staff chose which recommendations were to be included in the action plan by considering the political implications and financial responsibilities of each of the recommendations. The areas emphasized in the action plan, approved by the Board were: 1) rationale and goals, 2) program development (including the establishment of standards), 3) role definition for counselors, 4) certification requirements for counselors and guidance paraprofessionals, and 5) system wide staff development to meet student's guidance needs.

To help ensure that 1988 will not see the same problems about guidance being brought to the Board as in 1978, the Board has required a yearly update from the Maryland State Department of Education staff of the progress in implementing the action plan. This outcome, hopefully, will add credibility to similar research/evaluation undertadings on other topics in the future.